

The Dangers Of Labelling People

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Source: A taped lecture of the Shaykh
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[NB: what follows is not a verbatim transcript of the tape, but notes taken whilst listening to the tape.]

Some people do many righteous deeds but follow that with backbiting, slandering, or having suspicion about his fellow Muslim. On the Day of Judgement Allaah will call him to account. Those people, whom he slandered, backbited, etc. - they will take from his good deeds, and if he has no good deeds to give to them, they will give him their bad deeds. So this person (who had many good deeds) may end up in Hell Fire. This person is a true loser.

Those people who give da'wah need to be precise in their speech, and have the knowledge and ability to give da'wah. They should not spend too much time on issues of differences between the scholars; rather they should learn the adab of differing. Each student of knowledge should know his level and not go beyond that.

What is the first thing that the student of knowledge should know about is it ikhtilaaf or is it 'Aqeedah? We find some students of knowledge come across problems in their da'wah, whatever they may be. And they differ amongst themselves on what is the disease and what is the cure. But the Ahul-'Ilm with these issues are united, they are at one, no matter where they might be. Their da'wah is one. And those who are upon the correct way also agree with Ahul-'Ilm.

This da'wah has made the speech of the people one even though their countries are many. The position of Ahul-'Ilm to the fitnah is always one. That's why we find the speech of Ibn Taymiyyah or Ahmed the same as the scholars of today. Why? Because their knowledge was taken from one place, their da'wah is one, regardless of the differences in time and place.

Our need for the Ulemaa is very, very great. No-one belittles this except a jahil. Allaah has blessed this Ummah by giving us Ulemaa.

The Messenger of Allah (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Allah will not take away knowledge by removing it from the hearts of men, but he takes it away by the death of scholars."

We Salafi's have something that the other people don't have. We have a love for the scholars. The other groups do not give the scholars the correct status.

Imaam Ahmed said: "O my son, beware of speaking on a matter in which you are not preceded by a scholar."

So we Salafi's do not go outside the circle of the statements of the scholars. Look at those who give fataawaa from their minds, it is totally different from the fataawaa of the scholars. However we don't blindly follow the scholars, even if the majority of the scholars agree on a matter, it is not binding on us to follow

this. However, usually in these cases (where the majority agree on a matter) they are correct. Unfortunately many students of knowledge either do taqleed of the scholars or they belittle them.

We find that some of the students of knowledge unfortunately fall in one of two categories:

1) Some give no heed whatsoever to the differences among the Salafi's, they just say learn, learn, learn. They remain ignorant of the hizbi's, and they end up aiding the hizbi's. We have seen this happen. And the hizbi's will say to them: "why are you learning the 'Ilm-Rijal (knowledge of the narrators), this is the time of technology and the gun."

2) On the opposite side we find those who are concerned with nothing except differences. "This one said this and that one said that." What benefit is this? This type of individual, how will he defend the 'Aqeedah from the likes of the Ash'aree's, Khawaarij, Mu'tazilah, etc? Is he able to research the knowledge, its fundamental principles and its secondary matters? Can he give a knowledge-based fataawaa? If the scholars differed on a matter, does he know-how to research into that which is correct? Does he know the principles of tafsir?

I fear that the end of such a person will be dryness. So I advise you to be in the middle path. Start with 'Ilm-Sharee'ah. Understand the Sunnah and do not turn to anyone except the Ulemaa of the Sunnah, and do not study it under anyone except the Ulemaa of the Sunnah. And if the Ulemaa warn against a particular book or a person, then take heed.

Some ignorant ones say: "Those were the days of ta'teel Asma was-Sifaat (denial of the Names & Attributes of Allaah), but these are the days of ta'teel of the Sharee'ah."

Yet we find that most of the "Islamic" universities are teaching the 'Aqeedah of the Ash'aree's, and we have in our midst a state based upon Shee'ahism, and we find that most of the du'aat have incorrect 'Aqeedah. So concern yourselves with seeking knowledge, and understanding the differences between the people upon the way of the Salaf and Ahul-Bid'ah.

Don't be like the one, who when he differs with his Salafi brother, starts calling him a hizbi. What is this? The poor man is fighting hizbi's day and night and you're calling him a hizbi just because you differ with him. How can you do this?

You can differ over an individual - you may say he is a Salafi - your brother says he is a hizbi, or vice versa. How can you call me a hizbi because of this difference? Both of us are from Ahlus-Sunnah, defending Ahlus-Sunnah - we may differ in our ijtihad. After this differing over an individual - the differing now occurs between you and me - and you're calling me a hizbi because of this. Study the books of rijaal and see how the Salaf differed. We find Imaam Ahmed saying such and such a person is thiqah (strong, trustworthy), and we find another scholar saying that same person is a liar.

Imaam ibn Ma'een defended someone (Abu Huraymee) who no one from the Salaf had defended before. Abu Huraymee had been called a Shee'ah, a person with bad memory, a transmitter of weak hadeeth by the scholars, yet Imaam ibn Ma'een defended him. Did Imaam Ahmed or Imaam Abu Haatim make Jarh of Imaam ibn Ma'een (because of this)? Did they say he is from Ahul-Bid'ah? This shows that it is permissible to differ over a person.

In Yemen a group of people decided to make Hijrah from Ahul-Bid'ah. We told them: "Hijrah has conditions and you people are too weak to do this." They said: "No, we will do this (Hijrah)." All of them gathered against a particular hizbi and abandoned him, but then one person said: "He may have changed; I will go to give him da'wah." (When he did this) the other people started to label him and made Hijrah of him. And then a third person from this group said: "Brothers this is incorrect, you're oppressing him." So they abandoned him as well, and they got smaller and smaller.

So brothers, take heed. It is enough for you to take the speech of the people of knowledge. Most people do not have the ability to 'label' others. I see many brothers differing with each other. Brother A calls Brother B a hizbi. Brother B says this is incorrect, just because I disagreed with A over a certain matter I am being called a hizbi. And just because I tried to give da'wah to an astray person I am being called a hizbi.

Don't put the burden of labelling over your heads. Upon you is knowledge, having mercy and showing kindness. As the Messenger of Allah (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Gentleness does not enter upon anything except it beautifies it. And harshness does not enter upon anything except it disfigures it."

Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Ahlus-Sunnah are the most knowledgeable people on the earth and the most merciful of people on the earth." The da'wah needs knowledge and rahmaah. It's not permissible to divide our ranks. Just because we differ with someone - we take him outside of the fold of Salafiyyah. How can this be? How can we say we are Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah? The Jamaa'ah is coming together and following the Messenger (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

If you see a deviant going to a certain person, then give that person some advice regarding them, particularly if he is new in the Deen. But if he is a person of knowledge, then don't worry - you must differentiate between these two situations.

And if you differ with a da'ee, then (ask yourself) what are these da'ee's opposing us in, what is the difference between us and them. Is it a legitimate difference of opinion between us and them, or not? It's no good being together one day and the next day you're against me without a sound reason.

But if a person is a hizbi and a follower of desires and he's calling the people to it, then we must warn the people against him. Hizbiyyah starts off as something small, then grows, then becomes a bid'ah.

So have good thoughts about your brother. If a bad suspicion enters your heart, it is difficult to remove it.

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